



Community Cohesion Policy

Purpose

Section 21(4) of the Education Act 2002 (as inserted by section 38 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006) states that:

“The governing body of a maintained school shall, in discharging their functions relating to the conduct of the school:

- Promote the well-being of pupils at the school, and
- In the case of a school in England, promote community cohesion”

This duty came into effect on 1 September 2007. From 1 September 2008, HMCI has a duty under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 (as inserted by section 154 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006) to report on the contribution made by schools to community cohesion.

Additional Responsibility

Equality and Diversity
Race Equality
Citizenship
Religious Education
Anti-bullying

Scope

For our school, the term ‘community’ has a number of dimensions including:

- The school community – the students it serves, their families and the school’s staff;
- The community within which the school is located – the school in its geographical community and the people who live or work in that area;
- The community of Britain – all schools, are by definition part of this community;
- The global community – formed by EU and international links.

In addition our school has a community consisting of the partners within the Trust which will be enriched to support cohesion as the school grows.

Responsible Party

Our Governing Body is legally responsible for ensuring the promotion of social cohesion and the Headteacher is responsible for ensuring that the duties are fulfilled within school.

On a regular basis our governors will consider:

- The schools impact on the community, i.e. is the school exacerbating divisions or challenging them and breaking them down.
- How our school uses its own data around bullying and racist incidents to inform provision and school development.
- Whether we serve the wider community and help bring students and parents together.
- How representative our governing body is of the local community and students backgrounds.
- What our school can do to create an ethos of inclusion in which divisions and intolerance of others is unacceptable.
- How our school actively promotes understanding and dialogue between different groups, do we work in partnership with community and faith leaders.
- Any social problems which might impact adversely upon the school and how we have sought to engage key partners.
- Whether we have accessed support and good practice from within the local authority to promote social cohesion and what additional support is available.

Definition

By community cohesion, we mean working towards a society in which there is a common vision and sense of belonging by all communities; a society in which the diversity of people's backgrounds and circumstances is appreciated and valued; a society in which similar life opportunities are available to all; and a society in which strong and positive relationships exist and continue to be developed in the workplace, in schools and in the wider community.

• **The School Community**

- A school ethos established with clear aims, objectives and rules that underpin everyday practice, e.g. no bullying, teasing or racist comments.
- Partnership arrangements in place to share good practice and offer students the opportunities to meet and learn from other students from different backgrounds, e.g. through G&T, Aim Higher, Primary Liaison and work with the Excellence Cluster. Understanding other communities is also supported by the Humanities, PSHCE and RE curriculum.
- Use of parents to talk about living in different communities and using their skills to promote learning.
- School council to take into account pupil views, e.g. monitor racism, bullying and playground behaviour.

The area in which the school is located

- A strong primary liaison program contributes to and supports the local community in assuring future success.
- We have strong links with our local Policy Community Liaison Officer.
- Strong links and multi-agency working practice developed between the school and other local agencies.
- Engagement with parents through coffee mornings, refreshments after special assemblies, curriculum evenings, parent and child courses.
- Provision of extended services and community use of facilities for activities that take place in and out of school hours. Though this is limited to restricted hours due to PFI status the school is committed to Family Learning through twilight classes and Family Learning Days at weekends three times a year.

- **The UK Community**

- Curriculum in place for children to take into account how different communities may live, e.g. rural, suburban, urban through visits to other areas and other schools.
- We ensure that students are aware of national and local events that affect peoples' lives through assemblies and PSHCE, Learning about how different communities celebrate different festivals within Britain, e.g. Eid-Al-Addha, Ramadan, Eid-Al-Fitr, Diwali, Chinese New Year, Christmas, Harvest, Passover, Baisakhi.

- **The Global Community**

- Links established locally and also International Links
- Children raise funds to support a wide range of national and international charities
- Humanities curriculum illustrates how different people and communities live around the world.
- Charity events set up to support children around the world; children learn why they are raising funds, e.g. Children in Need, Red Nose Day etc.

Policy Statement

This document is accompanied by the Community Cohesion Action Plan that illustrates current strategies used to implement this policy.

Background

Park Lane is a smaller than average size secondary school. The number of students known to be eligible for free school meals is around three times the national average. Most students are White British and speak English as their first language. The number of students from minority ethnic backgrounds is low. The percentage of students that have a statement of Special Educational Needs is roughly within the average range, but overall, the proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is well above average.

Student mobility is high: a significant proportion of students do not join the school at the start of Year 7. It can be seen that our students experience a wide range of challenging circumstances, including significant levels of social and economic deprivation. Consequently the school takes its role in bringing all the elements of our learning community together and ensures we all enjoy a successful future. This policy illustrates how we will achieve this whilst meeting statutory requirements.

The curriculum of our school will promote the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of our students and of society and prepare our students for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life.

We already consider this part of our role, and already work in ways which promote community cohesion. As migration and economic change alter the shape of our increasingly diverse local communities, it is more important than ever that our school plays a full part in promoting community cohesion. Our school should be a thriving, cohesive community, but is also has a vital part to play in building a more cohesive society.

Every school – whatever its intake and wherever it is located – is responsible for educating children and young people who will live and work in a country which is diverse in terms of culture, faith, language and ethnicity.

Whilst our school is characterised by ethnic, cultural, faith and linguistic factors we still have responsibility to ensure that our children learn about an even wider cultural and community heritage, especially the wider community of the UK and the global community.

We wish to show that through our ethos and curriculum our school can promote a common sense of identity and support diversity, showing our students how different communities can be united by common experiences and values.

We believe that it is the duty of our school to address issues of ‘how we live together’ and ‘dealing with difference’ however controversial and difficult they might sometimes seem.

Considerations in Promoting Community Cohesion

We need to consider what activities already take place within our school and what might be arranged in co-operation with other schools and our partnerships and links in the wider community.

1. Teaching, Learning and Curriculum

We need to ensure that we provide:

- Lessons across the curriculum that promote common values and help pupils to value differences and to challenge prejudice and stereotyping – for example, opportunities in citizenship classes for students to discuss issues of identity and diversity and what it means ‘to live together in the UK’.
- A programme of curriculum based activities whereby students’ understanding of community and diversity is enriched through visits and meetings with members of different communities.
- Support for students for whom English is an additional language (EAL) to enable them to achieve at the highest possible level in English.
- An effective voice and involvement of students in the governance and organisation of the school in a way that teaches them to participate in and make a difference in school, in their local community and beyond.
- Opportunities for discussing issues of identity and diversity across the curriculum.

2. Equity and Excellence

Our school has a commitment to secure high standards of attainment for all students from all ethnic backgrounds and different socio-economic statuses, ensuring that students are treated with respect and are supported to achieve their full potential.

The school tracking systems enable us to evaluate progress of different groups and to tackle underperformance by any particular group.

Our school will monitor incidents of prejudice, bullying and harassment. We will monitor whether students from particular groups are more likely to be excluded or disciplined than others. Appropriate behaviour and discipline policies are in place.

Our school admissions criterion emphasizes the importance of admission arrangements that promote community cohesion and social equity.

3. Examples from our school include:

- A focus on securing high standards of attainment for all students from all ethnic backgrounds and of different socio-economic status by tracking progress and targeting intervention appropriately.
- The development of gifted and talented children within the school as well as having effective procedures to support children with special educational needs.
- Equal opportunities and race equality policies are in place.
- Developing programmes of work for new arrivals, e.g. our new arrivals procedures.
- Effective approaches in place to deal with incidents of prejudice, bullying and harassment, e.g. monitoring reports to governors termly; clear school procedures.
- Monitoring our school behaviour policies so that no groups suffer prejudice. Ensure that inappropriate behaviour, exclusions, racism, bullying and drug related incidents and other stereotyping is monitored termly and reported to governors.

4. Engagement and Ethos

School to school: we shall seek to broaden the ways that we work in partnership with other schools. We shall look either locally or further field and the means of developing the relationship may be through exchange visits or more likely through the internet. Sharing facilities also provides a means for pupils to interact, as do opportunities for meaningful intercultural activities such as sport and drama. Good partnership activities with the local and wider community might include:

- Working together with community representatives, for example through mentoring schemes or bringing community representatives into school to work with the students, ensuring that the student voice is heard and able to effect change.
- Maintaining strong links and multi-agency working between the school and other local agencies, such as the youth support service, the police and social care and health professionals.
- Engagement with parents through coffee mornings, curriculum evenings, parent and child courses and family liaison work.
- Effective use of its dedicated parent support worker in supporting families from all backgrounds.

Monitoring Social Cohesion at Park Lane Learning Trust

The school staff and governors will regularly review activity under the key headings above to ensure that this is further developed and refined. Evidence of social cohesion activity will be kept on file.